is estimated at 213 lakh bales as compared of 177 lakh bales in the cotton year 2003-04. The total consumption of cotton is also expected to increase from 173.25 lakh bales in 2003-04 to 193 lakh bales in the current cotton year 2004-05. On account of enhanced cotton production, the import of cotton during the current cotton year may witness a marginal decrease to 5 lakh bales from 6.50 lakh bales in the last cotton season. The domestic cotton prices at some places have touched the Minimum Support Price declared by the Government and the Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) has procured 1, 14,58,571 quintals of kapas (equivalent to lint cotton of 22,23,175 bales of 170 kg each), which is an all time high.

(c) From time to time, representations from various quarters for export of cotton are received. At present export of cotton is free without any quantitative restriction. However, the actual quantum of export depends upon the market forces.

Textiles Mills in North-Eastern Region

294. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the details of textiles mills proposed to be set up in the States of North-Eastern Region during the current year; and

(b) the details of financial allocation made by government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) The Government does not set up mills in the country. The role of the Government in this regard is that of a facilitator. The Government through various schemes and policies create conducive environment for the growth of the textile mills.

(b) Does not arise.

Financial support for Handloom Sector

295. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that handloom sector is in a declining stage and most of the weavers families are living below poverty line;